



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 1-1-2014 to 12/31/2014**

### **THE DESIGN COMMISSION**

#### **The Board/Commission's Mission Statement per City Code (Section 2-1-129) is:**

The commission shall provide advisory recommendations to the city council as requested by the city council to assist in developing public policy and to promote excellence in the design and development of the urban environment.

The commission shall:

- (1) Offer policy recommendations regarding specific issues of urban design;
- (2) Participate in developing design guidelines;
- (3) Unless otherwise directed by the city council, for projects that require the approval of the Planning Commission or the Zoning and Platting Commission:
  - (a) Review a project only after a formal request by the project sponsor or applicant; and
  - (b) Complete the review before the respective Planning or Zoning and Platting Commission takes final action;
- (4) Provide citizen education and outreach regarding quality urban design;
- (5) Provide a venue for citizen input on the design and development of the urban environment;
- (6) Maintain liaison relationships with city staff and other boards and commissions; and
- (7) Perform other activities as directed by the city council.

The commission may appoint one or more of its members to serve as liaison to a project specific community advisory group addressing urban design and planning issues at the formal request of the project sponsor.

**1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

**A. Specific outcomes of significance:**

## Design Commission Annual Review and Work Plan 2014

- a. The Design Commission continued its study of City infrastructure projects thru discussions and meetings with City Staff and Council. The Commission continued with a work plan to execute the Council directive by the fall of 2015.
  - b. The Design Commission assisted in policy development thru liaisons to Council charged study areas to help advocate the greater vision.
  - c. The Design Commission established a new working method for reviewing developer driven projects that wish to establish substantial compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines as part of the newly established process to streamline the Density Bonus entitlement system.
  - d. The Design Commission restructured its Working Groups for increased efficiency and service to the public.
- B. The Design Commission reviewed public and private projects as demonstrated in the agendas.
  - C. Drafted project review letters as requested.
  - D. Agendas
  - E. Meeting minutes
- 2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

Evaluation 2014:

The Design Commission ("Commission") successfully achieved the goals and objectives as set forth by the City Council in evaluating projects for compliance with approved Urban Design guidelines and setting forth design criteria for urban projects. The Commission continues to evaluate urban projects for compliance with the updated, citywide Urban Design Guidelines.

**3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.**

- A. To finalize Infrastructure Projects Design Guidelines by the end of fall 2015 in accordance with City Council directive under Resolution No. 20120816-060.
- B. To raise the awareness of urban design, establishing and promoting design guidelines in order to improve the quality of the built environment throughout the metropolitan area, and informing policies that shape the application of urban design principles,
- C. To efficiently and effectively evaluate projects in order for developments to see DC as a tremendous asset and continue to use DC as a resource for assisting their projects.
- D. To protect the future development of areas that have the potential to have dense development

- E. To reorganize the working methodologies of the Design Commission in order to adapt to the new council structure.
- F. To continue to uphold the duties of the Commission's Mission Statement.

**4. Proposed activities for the next year to achieve the board's goals and objectives.**

- A. Offer strategic help to City Staff in the review of changes to the Land Development Code as they propose them and present it to the Design Commission.
- B. Work to finalize the Infrastructure Design Guidelines, integrate them into the urban design guidelines and craft the final documentation.
- C. The Commission will continue to refine the Design Commission Project Review process by including, but not limited to, the following
  - a. Creation of a "Frequently Asked Questions" list for project submissions
  - b. Review of the required items for project submittal process.
  - c. Develop processes that streamline the review process including areas of critical concern.
- D. The Commission will work with the City of Austin Planning & Development Review Department on issues and activities pertaining to Urban Design such as the Comprehensive Plan, Urban Design Guidelines, the Commercial Design Standards ordinance, and design implications of code amendments.
- E. The Commission will continue to conduct project reviews and make advisory recommendations upon request by project sponsors and/or applicants regarding private and public development to the City Council, the Planning Commission, Planning & Development Review Department, and other boards and commissions, utilizing the Urban Design Guidelines as a primary reference.
- F. The Commission will continue to conduct project reviews and make advisory recommendations to the city council regarding the City of Austin improvement projects (Great Streets, buildings, bridges, roads, parks, infrastructure, etc.).
- G. The Commission will monitor planning activities through Design Commission liaisons selected emerging projects and small area plans such as the Airport Boulevard Redevelopment Initiative, Downtown Austin Plan Implementation, Downtown Way-finding, East Riverside Corridor Regulating Plan, Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, Subchapter E, and Waterfront Overlay, South Austin Neighborhood Plan.
- H. The Commission will offer design guideline education and act as a resource for city departments, developers, other boards and commissions, interested stakeholder, and the community regarding design related issues.

## Design Commission Annual Review and Work Plan 2014

- I. The Commission will continue commission efforts to offer general assistance and advisory recommendations on issues as defined in the Urban Design Guidelines.
- 5. Proposed work schedule: The commission proposes to hold public meetings during fiscal year 2015-2016:**
- A. On the fourth Monday of every month unless specified by an approved meeting calendar.
  - B. When called to review and make advisory recommendations of subjects as may be assigned for commission review by request from city management, other city departments, and or city council.